

AN: Well, after the shock of the last story, I'm here with an even more surprising entry in the *Poison* series! You'll see why... Enjoy!

Poison

Bump

"Yeah... I understand... Of course... Okay. Bye."

TPYMK placed the phone down, turning to face Sarafina, who was sat on the sofa in the living room of his rather pleasant-looking house. He'd purchased the building not too long ago. A few months prior to Haiba being murdered. He thought that the city he lived in was a rather happy place, free from the crime and violence that plagued other cities – such as where Haiba was killed.

However, he was slowly beginning to realise that this city was much, much worse.

"There," TPYMK said, sitting down beside Sarafina on the sofa. "I think I've taken care of things."

"You called a doctor?" Sarafina asked.

"No," TPYMK said. "I called Wazimu. We know you're pregnant. I don't need a doctor to tell me that." His gaze shifted downwards to look at the huge bump protruding from Sarafina's stomach. "I want to know if that baby can survive inside of you with all those drugs..."

Sarafina stared straight ahead, tears streaming from her eyes. She gently placed a paw against her bump.

A whole new life was growing inside of her. It was incomprehensible. She'd gone through so much to try and get off the drugs – and now she'd been burdened with a baby? It made her crave for a pound or two of Sumu instantly... She wouldn't be able to cope without her next hit.

TPYMK stared at the lioness. "Are you all right?"

"No," Sarafina said flatly. "Why would you think otherwise?"

TPYMK shook his head in disapproval. "Why didn't you tell me, Sarafina?"

"I didn't know!" Sarafina snapped, a little more bluntly than she would've liked. She quickly apologised, though. "Sorry."

"Okay, wrong thing to say," TPYMK mumbled. "When did you find out?"

"The same time as you," Sarafina said.

She was surprised that the detective was even asking her these questions only now. He never said anything about it back by the river when he noticed the bump. He just ushered her quickly into the house, left for bed and didn't say anything until the next morning. It was now late evening, and he *still* hadn't said that much.

It was like he was hiding something...

"I had no idea about any of this."

"Well, there has to be a reason for it," TPYMK told her. "I think that maybe Timon somehow managed to—"

Sarafina shook her head. "No," she interrupted. "He didn't rape me. He just *tried* to. This wasn't him."

"Then who *was* it?" TPYMK questioned. "I mean, I can't comprehend how many animals you must have slept with. Especially after you told me about those Mixers..."

"It could be anyone," Sarafina said with a shrug of her shoulders. "I've done hundreds of them at the parties. And I'm sure you'll be glad to hear that I thoroughly regret it. I don't need one of your sly comments about me using protection."

"I'm not saying anything," TPYMK replied. "I'm just trying to help you. Work it out."

"There's nothing *to* work out," Sarafina retorted. "I'm pregnant. My life sucks. End of story."

"Well, we obviously need to track down the father," TPYMK said.

"No," Sarafina said firmly. "I don't care about the father. It doesn't matter to me."

"What do you mean?" TPYMK didn't understand.

"Who do you think the father is?" Sarafina asked, staring into his eyes. "It's obviously gonna be some Sumu-snorting junkie. You think I'd want someone like that hanging around my kid?"

"How hypocritical," TPYMK commented.

"Shut up," Sarafina said. "I'm trying to go straight."

"That's what worries me," TPYMK admitted. "This pregnancy... It could be a bad thing for you."

"What do you mean?" Sarafina asked.

"Well, think about it," TPYMK said. "I think a recovering drug addict – especially someone in the early stages of recovery like you – would want to keep their stress levels down. A kid is only gonna make things worse. It could become too much. Then you'll go straight back to the Sumu. A first class relapse."

"You don't think I can be a parent?" Sarafina presumed.

"You want me to be honest with you? No," TPYMK said, shaking his head. "I think you'll be dead within a month of that kid's birth. You have no idea what it's like to be a parent."

"Oh, and you *do*?" Sarafina shot back.

"No," TPYMK said. "I just know you won't be able to cope. Maybe you should consider... well, you know..."

Sarafina's apple green eyes flared up with anger upon realising what the detective was implying. She felt like slapping him across the face there and then.

"I'm not getting rid of it!" she yelled. "You think I'm going to abort my baby just so you can continue with your stupid investigation?"

"That's not what I meant, and you know it," TPYMK said. "I'm worried about you, Sarafina. You can barely take care of yourself, let alone a child."

"I can try," Sarafina argued. "And if not, I don't know... Put it up for adoption or something."

"If it survives."

Sarafina glared at the detective. "*What?*"

"I don't know if you've noticed this, Sarafina, but your health isn't exactly the best," TPYMK told her. "I think – what is it? – four months of Sumu abuse is going to mess your system up pretty bad. We don't even know how far into the pregnancy you are. Your baby's head could be filled with all kinds of... whatever. Not to mention the deformity."

Sarafina bowed her head, the implications slowly sinking in.

TPYMK was probably right. She had taken many different kinds of drugs over the past four months. She'd started sleeping with other animals at around about the same time, too. There was no telling what kind of effects the drugs might have on the baby... It might not even survive the birth. She could miscarry at any given moment.

"You see what I mean now?" TPYMK asked, earning a quiet nod from the lioness. "This isn't going to work, Sarafina."

"Screw you," Sarafina mumbled, feeling more miserable than ever. The Sumu had truly messed things up now. "Screw everything..."

A knock on the door interrupted their conversation.

"That'll be Wazimu," TPYMK said, getting up from the sofa.

"This isn't good," Wazimu said, turning to TPYMK after he had finished given Sarafina a quick examination. "And when I say that, I *mean* it."

"I had a feeling it wouldn't be good news," TPYMK said, sat on the sofa with his arms folded. "So what's the problem?"

"Well, I'm no doctor, but after examining Sumu and its effects on the body, I think I can safely say that the baby will suffer defects upon birth," Wazimu explained.

"What kind of defects?" Sarafina piped up, staring at the chemist. Maybe it wouldn't be too bad...

"The baby could be born blind, or deaf," Wazimu replied. "It could be born with three legs – or no legs at all. Its claws won't grow properly. Its mental health would definitely be lesser than that of a normal cub, too. There could be any number of disabilities involved."

"So there's no chance of a healthy birth?" TPYMK asked. He didn't want to dismiss the possibility.

Wazimu shook his head. "No way," he said. "It's impossible for there not to be defects. Sarafina is a fully grown lioness, and even she looks quite ill already. Imagine what it'd do to a baby... Sumu users only tend to last four months, you know."

Sarafina winced at the mention of that statistic. She had been using Sumu for almost four months now, and she felt worse than ever. Even after she decided to at least try and give it up. She felt ill all the time... That obviously wasn't a good sign.

"I did warn you, Sarafina," TPYMK said, noticing the pained look on her face. "I'm sorry."

"Whatever," Sarafina said, looking away from him.

"I'd suggest an abortion," Wazimu said. "It could kill you, too."

"What?" Sarafina's head jerked up.

"You're weak enough as it is," Wazimu said. "I think an excessively painful birth – and it *will* be excessively painful – will be too much for you to handle. You'll die in childbirth if you don't take matters to safely abort the foetus."

"But it's... but it's a baby," Sarafina sputtered. "I can't just... I can't..."

"You *have* to," TPYMK told her. "For your own good."

"It's a life, though," Sarafina protested.

"It's up to her," Wazimu said. "But I can assure you that you'll be dead by the time the baby is born."

Sarafina knew that she was about to burst into tears, so she quickly left the room.

"I'm going for a walk," she muttered.

TPYMK and Wazimu heard the front door slam shut.

"Will she be all right?" Wazimu asked.

"I don't know," TPYMK said, tempted to go after her. He decided against it, though, despite his worries that she may go and buy drugs... However, he didn't think she would do that. As surprising as it sounded, he trusted her. "Just leave her alone for a while."

"She has to get rid of that baby," Wazimu said. "She won't survive. You know that, right?"

TPYMK nodded. "Yeah. But she's... difficult. It's gonna take a lot of work to convince her that it's the right thing for her."

"I don't know why you bother," Wazimu said. "She's just junkie scum."

TPYMK avoided Wazimu's stare. "Perhaps..."

Sarafina hacked and slashed at the tree trunk in anger, leaving claw marks scattered all over its surface.

"Damn it!"

She screamed at the top of her voice, wanting the whole world to hear her pain. Her claws – well, what remained of them – were left bent and aching after her outburst.

The lioness slumped to the ground, feeling as if life had finally defeated her. As if past tragedies in her life weren't bad enough, the drugs made everything worse. And now a baby – a goddamn *baby* – had arrived to worsen the situation. Why was she cursed with such bad luck?

She was angry. Angry with the Sumu users in the clearing for doing this to her. They had all slept with her – and now she had to suffer the consequences. Whoever the father was, she hated him more than anything...

"Just kill me now," she moaned, tears running down her cheeks. She didn't even feel like Sumu anymore; just the thought of taking it made her sick. She just wanted to go to sleep, and never wake up again. "Just kill me now..."

Her life had lost all meaning.

Nothing would ever make her happy again.

Nothing.

"Sarafina."

Her head shot up upon hearing the voice. "Who is it?"

A lion was stood in front of her. He had glowing red eyes. But, for whatever reason, Sarafina didn't feel afraid at all. They almost had a friendly appearance to them.

"Are you okay?"

Sarafina shook her head. "No," she said. "But it's nothing that would matter to you."

"I couldn't help but notice that you seemed troubled," the lion said. He glanced at the claw marks scattered across the tree

behind her. "Your anger knows no bounds..."

"Who are you?" Sarafina asked.

"My name is Death," said the lion, prompting a frightened look from Sarafina. "Don't worry. I don't bite."

"What do you want?" the lioness said. "And how do you know my name?"

"I know everything about my customers," Death said.

Sarafina let out a little gasp. *He's a Sumu dealer? Oh, God – what if he knows Timon?*

"Don't look so afraid," said Death. "I'm not here to hurt you."

"Then what *are* you here for?" Sarafina questioned. "Because if you try anything, I will claw your throat out."

"Understood." Death nodded. "I am here to offer you... a proposition."

"A proposition?" Sarafina thought about the word for a moment. "You mean... like an offer?"

"Yes," Death confirmed. "That's right." His eyes fell upon Sarafina's baby bump. "I see that you're pregnant. That must have been... quite a shock, I'd imagine."

"You can say that again," Sarafina grumbled.

"I assume that you will be keeping the child?" Death said.

Sarafina looked up at the evening sky. "Well... I want to," she confessed. "But they say that my... health problems... will stop me."

"There's always a chance," said Death optimistically. "Miracles do happen now and again."

Sarafina nodded. "That was my thinking," she said, placing a paw against her bump. "This wasn't planned, but... it could be something good."

"I can help you," Death told her, "if you agree to my proposition."

The lioness shrugged. She might as well hear him out. "Okay. What is it?"

"You're a Sumu user, aren't you?" asked Death.

"*Was*," Sarafina corrected him. "I'm trying to quit."

And he can forget it if he wants to try and get me on the stuff again, she thought to herself. I'll rip his tail off and shove it up his butt.

"How noble," chuckled Death. "But it doesn't matter whether you are a user or not. In fact, I'd say your abstinence from the drug would be more beneficial."

"Why?" Sarafina wondered.

"I want to offer you a job," Death revealed. "My two dealers for this area have sadly perished in unfortunate circumstances, and I would like you to take over their position."

Sarafina's eyes widened in realisation. "You want me to start slinging S?"

Death's eyes grew brighter. "Yes," he said. "The pay is handsome, Sarafina. Three hundred thousand dollars a month."

She almost choked on her own breath as she heard that.

"All I need you to do," Death explained, "is collect the drugs from my transportation team and sell it to the customers at the parties. It couldn't be simpler."

"But... why me?" Sarafina said. "What makes me so special?"

"You have the right skills," Death told her. "And you have to provide for your child, don't you?"

Sarafina stared down at her bump. The baby. The baby that she wouldn't kill. No. She would give birth to the child, and raise it

like a proper mother. Screw TPYMK and that stupid chemist; they didn't know anything. She could cope just fine!

"And... I think you want revenge."

Sarafina stared into his eyes. "Huh?"

"You heard me," Death said. "You've slept with almost every single one of my customers here. One of them has to be the father. It's all their fault that you have been burdened with this child, Sarafina. Wouldn't you like to take revenge? Fulfil their addictions until it eventually wears them away and they die? I think that's what you *really* want."

Sarafina continued to gaze at the mysterious lion.

Revenge...

She smiled.

I like the sound of that.

"Yes," Sarafina said. "I do. I'm gonna give 'em what they want – and then watch as they rot."

Death chuckled. "I had a feeling that was your desire. So..."

He extended a paw to her.

"Do we have a deal?"

Sarafina's smile grew into a grin. She gladly shook his paw.

"Deal."

Death grinned back. "Well, then," he said. "Welcome to the business, Sarafina."

Sarafina's happiness was evident.

"Thank you... sir."

To Be Continued...

AN: Shock! Horror! Gasp! Sarafina is now a Sumu dealer. Death certainly made her quite the enticing offer... This is obviously quite surprising. Still, that's *Poison* for you. It's full of twists and turns! I can't wait to hear your reactions for this one...